Cars May Come, Cars May Go

By C. B. FISHER

ROLLS IS STILL ROLLING

JOHN DUFF, a retired Scottish lawyer of Sidney, drives one of the oldest Rolls-Royces in British Columbia—or in Canada, maybe. People turn their heads with amazement as they watch it disappear smoothly down the avenue, rolling softly on its way. Its carriage-like lines are incongruous, but she has sailed over mile after mile of asphalt roadway.

The driver at the wheel turns neither to the left nor the right unnecessarily. He watches the road carefully, a trifle aloof, like any good driver. At Sidney the car is surrounded by tourists. They look upon it as an attraction, an ancient wonder from a bygone decade, a touch of old England.

"After retiring in Edinburgh in 1947 I decided to take the car to Canada," the owner, who lives on McTavish Road, a couple of miles from the village, says.

"You don't get anything quite like them. I didn't want to part with it. It's a dear old friend."

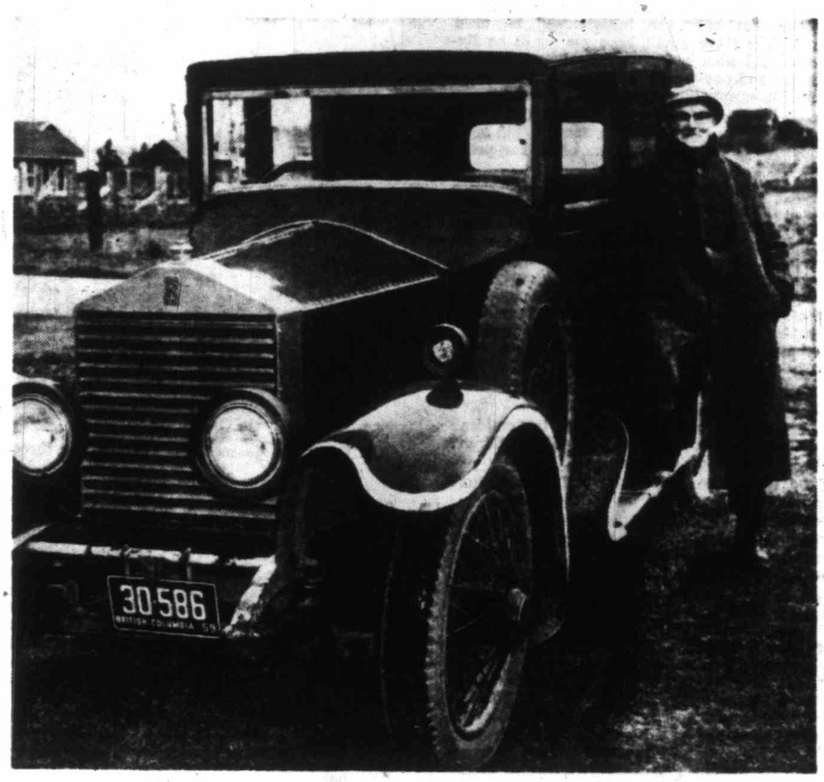
The car is a 1927 Rolls-Royce, a vintage model now, but unlike other museum pieces, it is at work every day of the year, hitting 60 easily, commuting with Victoria weekly.

The automobile belonged originally to a wealthy Scottish family, who besides a couple of other Rolls-Royces, had a houseful of girls. The other two later models appeared fresher, prettier to the eyes of the debutantes, so they insisted that father sell the ugly duckling.

"She looked so ugly no one wanted her. She wasn't smart enough for the ladies of the family who sold it to me. I bought it through John Croall & Sons of Edinburgh. She's a thing apart, a steadfast friend."

The Rolls-Royce is a six-cylinder saloon called the "Little Twenty." It is a tan-colored creation with a black hood or bonnet that closes with an expensive lock. It's Rolls-Royce through and through, a thing you can't mistake. Inside it is lined with leather upholstery. Even the framework is leather covered to soften road noises and the general vibration of travelling. It has dual ignition—something for a car in 1927! And the horn has a touch of the klaxon as it clears the road ahead. Every grease cup has a screw top, and it takes hours to regrease her. There is plenty of leg room in the back seat. You can stretch out luxuriously.

"I never had any trouble getting tires for her out here. I get all parts for her from the company's headquarters at Shrubb Lane, London. They know the car well, and I get some nice letters from the company. I order a few sets of points and they throw in a couple of extras. Nice people to deal with," says Mr. Duff.



The old Rolls played a part in war and her owner, John Duff, simply cannot part with her . . . a tried and trusted friend

Although the car has a perfect self-starter, Mr. Duff often declines to use it.

"I never start a car off cold. I always crank all my cars when cold. Puts a little vapor in the cylinders."

The day had been bitter, it was close to zero, and the car hadn't been running for 24 hours. The 78-year-old owner inserted the crank easily and turned it half way round lightly. He repeated the operation, paused, and gave it a harder flick. The engine started immediately, idled easily, without a touch of throttle. It sounded like a smooth-running sewing machine, a beautiful job.

"I'm a good mechanic. I'm also a cabinet maker and carpenter, an actor and a producer of plays. The last production I directed before leaving Scotland was a Graham Moffat play."

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John Duff was born in Perthshire in 1882. About the time he was graduating from Edinburgh University he saw one of the first cars in Scotland, a tiller-steered job. It belonged to the Coats family of thread fame.

Later he went into the Civil Service as a legal light. It was during the first part of the war that his old friend proved its worth. Historic papers and documents, of a priceless nature, had to be removed from Edinburgh. The Luftwaffe had begun to hit the East Coast with everything they had. One bomb could destroy a treasure.

"We loaded the car with ancient records and drove them to country mansions where they wouldn't be bombed. I took a dozen trips to the Highlands, and places like Oban, in all kinds of weather. An official chauffeur drove the Rolls on these occasions and I watched the documents. I was responsible for the transference. She did an awful lot of work for the British government.

"Edinburgh wasn't quite spared during the war. We got a few land mines. Leith, nearby, got the big ones. After the war the documents were returned to the capital in perfect condition."

The car has been driven all over Scotland, through the glens, into the Highlands, along winding roads to distant lochs, to country homes and estates. Mr. Duff's favorite county is Perthshire.

Mr. Duff came out in 1948 in the Mauretania, and some three months later had the Rolls shipped by freighter direct to Victoria.

"I lost the original clock in it to a thief in a London garage. One of those smooth smiling guys. They never caught him. She landed at Ogden Point and I went down—and got her. You can't part with an old friend, you know, especially one as faithful as mine."

ADVERTISING TELLS STORY of ANOTHER ERA

By IRENE ROBERTSON

The bright eye, the alert look, the snappy gait which identified the "comer" — now known as a gentleman of distinction—were all due to drinking Postum.

So says the December, 1917, issue of Pictorial Revue.

In the same magazine Lilian Russel offered to reveal her beauty secrets. Freeman's face powder was available in all tints, and J. Parker Pray's versatile "Rosaline" could be used either on milady's face or fingernails.

The most practical car of that year was the Overland Light Four, which sold for $795. The Victor Talking Machine Co. advertised victrolas ranging in price from $10 to $400, and any woman 18 years of age or over could become a nurse by means of a 'simple, perfected system'—a 32-lesson correspondence course.

This publication, and another time capsule, a 1918 Spring and Summer catalogue put out by the F. S. Newman Co. of Winnipeg, have provided me with a weekend of entertainment.

The advertising style and illustrations of both are startling.

The space devoted to the description of a single item leads one to suspect that the copywriters were paid by the word.

Male mannequins, in blue serge suits priced at $19.95 and described as 'natty,' appear extremely narrow-shouldered and long-legged.

Caps seemed favored above hats, nightshirts took precedenee over pyjamas.

Buxom-looking ladies sweltered through the heat of a Winnipeg summer clad in ankle-length combinations and knitted cotton petticoats.

Middy blouses and shepherd check skirts made a smart street outfit and an apron was just one dress cut large enough to fit over another. Dust caps and motor bonnets were necessities.

Then, as now, women followed the style trend and wore whatever atrocity the fashion houses thrust on them; with one added advantage. In 1918 it was possible to dress in the height of discomfort and look just as ridiculous as we do today —for less money.

Two complete outfits, one dress, one hat, one work apron and one boudoir cap cost $3.95—delivered.